



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

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METROACCESS COMPLAINT RESOLUTION REPORT – May 2015

Accessibility Advisory Committee Public Comment: May 4, 2015

Customer #1

Comment/Complaint: The customer asked that the AAC Full Committee report be more focused on MetroAccess quality of scheduling and the quality of vehicles. The customer stated he understood MetroAccess was a shared ride, but he was concerned about the wear and tear an extended ride had on the human body. The customer stated the vehicles did not appear to be equipped for long-term riding.

Resolution: Prior to the meeting, the customer spoke with Ms. Jennifer Weber, MTM Quality Assurance, and provided her with specific dates on which he indicated the ride time was too long. Ms. Weber performed an investigation of the dates and found that the trips did not exceed MetroAccess On Board Time (OBT) fixed route equivalent standards, though they may have benefitted from increased focus to routing. The investigation findings were shared with the OCC Management for review and counseling of Dispatch staff. Ms. Weber spoke with the customer about the investigation findings and permissible OBT standards on May 21, 2015.

Customer #2

Comment/Complaint: The customer stated she had not attended an AAC meeting in a long time and had been very pleased with the service for the most part. The customer stated she recently had a four hour ride that took her through Virginia and DC. The customer stated a couple with dementia was picked up during this ride. The customer stated she was very grateful for the service but thought it sometimes had glitches.

Resolution: Ms. Jennifer Weber spoke with the customer prior to the meeting, and the customer provided the specific date on which this occurred. An investigation was performed; it was confirmed the customer's ride time was excessive on the specified date as a result of an improper trip movement. This was brought to the attention of OCC Management. The responsible employee was coached and counseled. Ms. Weber discussed the findings with the customer on May 8, 2015.

MetroAccess Subcommittee Public Comment: May 18, 2015

Customer #1

Comment/Complaint: The customer stated her MetroAccess fare seemed too high, and she was concerned that she was being overcharged. The customer stated she volunteered at her church, and the fare for this trip was \$6.50; however, the fare used to be \$4.00, and she did not understand what caused the increase. The customer stated some individuals traveled farther than her, and their fare was only \$4.00.

Resolution: Ms. Allison Anderson, MetroAccess Operations Manager – Operations Control Center, stated someone would speak with the customer after the meeting to discuss the details. Ms. Anderson stated the fare was based off the fastest fixed route equivalent. Ms. Anderson stated someone would work with the customer to determine if there were other time options that might produce a lower fare. Ms. Jennifer Weber, MTM Quality Assurance, performed an investigation and determined the fare disparity was the result of different requested pick up times. Ms. Weber identified the pick up time that would result in the lower fare, and this information was shared with the customer on May 20, 2015.

Customer #2

Comment/Complaint: The customer stated he recognized problems with Dispatch and the vehicles' Rangers. The customer stated the Rangers needed to be updated because they were unable to provide directions to the operators in some parts of the MetroAccess service area. The customer stated operators should be able to navigate without the Rangers, but many were unable to. The customer stated he was picked up over half an hour late on May 14 and 15, 2015, and he was told the late arrival was due to traffic. The customer stated the dispatchers should be trained to consider traffic while coordinating the trips. The customer stated he was picked up three hours late in Crystal City, Virginia in 2013 and 2014.

Resolution: Mr. Omar Browne, MetroAccess Operations Manager – Field Operations, stated all operators were trained to read maps, but they were currently being retrained. Mr. Browne stated it was important for the operators not to rely exclusively on the GPS. An investigation was performed based off the customer's allegations; much of the information from the customer's earlier trips in 2013 and 2014 was archived, but it was confirmed that the customer was

picked up late on these dates. The customer received trip credits as a result of the late trips. Ms. Jennifer Weber encouraged the customer to report any complaints at the time when they occur to ensure they can be addressed in a timely and effective manner. The customer's trips on May 14 and 15th, 2015 were both late as a result of improper trip movements. The investigation findings were shared with OCC Management for coaching and counseling of dispatch staff. Ms. Weber discussed the findings with the customer on May 20, 2015.

Customer #3

Comment/Complaint: The customer stated she was the President of The National Federation of the Blind – National Harbor Chapter, and she had not received any advertisements pertaining to WMATA's Travel Training program. The customer suggested WMATA add a tag line at the bottom of emails about this program to increase awareness. The customer stated USDA was moving its primary entrance, and the geocoding consequently needed to be adjusted. The customer stated Metro's new faring program should be tested for accessibility, particularly within the blind community.

Resolution: Ms. Allison Anderson stated Mr. Christopher Colbert, WMATA Operations Manager – Eligibility Certification and Outreach, would reach out to the customer to use her as a resource for travel training outreach. Mr. Christian Kent, WMATA Assistant General Manager – Access Services, stated he supported the idea of adding a tag line to emails. Ms. Anderson stated the geocoding at USDA would be adjusted accordingly. Ms. Anderson stated she had been attending meetings discussing features of the faring program, and it was still in the beginning phases. Ms. Jennifer Weber spoke with the customer on May 20, 2015; the customer did not yet know the exact coordinates of the updated entrance for USDA but said she would provide Ms. Weber with that information once she was able.

Customer #4

Comment/Complaint: The customer requested a map of the service area. The customer stated it should not matter how long a customer had been using MetroAccess; all customers should be able to travel to the same locations regardless of whether it was a weekday or a weekend.

Resolution: Mr. Christian Kent stated the funding for the service came from the various jurisdictions within the service area. Mr. Kent stated the Board decided to limit the MetroAccess service area to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the nearest bus or rail station. Mr. Kent stated people had been voicing their concerns about this

decision, and while the MetroAccess staff would do what they could to assist, people were also able to speak directly to their city and/or county about this issue. Mr. Kent stated there may be other services available to accommodate when MetroAccess could not. Mr. Kent stated it was important for the decision makers in the different jurisdictions to be aware of this unmet need. Ms. Jennifer Weber spoke with the customer to discuss the locations where she was hoping to travel. The customer provided Ms. Weber with this information, and Ms. Weber located an address on the outer-edge of the service area nearest to the requested address. Ms. Weber advised the customer that she could travel to this location using MetroAccess and potentially meet another source of transportation upon arrival.

Customer #5

Comment/Complaint: The customer stated he was charged one fare to travel to his destination, but the fare was different when he returned home. The customer asked if the fare increased after 7:00 PM.

Resolution: Ms. Allison Anderson stated the fare structure did not change at a certain time in the evening. Ms. Anderson stated someone would review the customer's trip details to see if there was a lower fare option available at a time close to that selected by the customer. Ms. Jennifer Weber reviewed the customer's trip fares and determined he could leave an hour earlier from the location to generate the lower fare. Ms. Weber spoke with the customer about the findings on May 20, 2015.

Customer #6

Comment/Complaint: The customer stated last month she was picked up in Capitol Heights, and two other customers were picked up in Largo and Bowie before she was delivered home. The customer stated she was on board the vehicle from 5:00 until 8:00 PM. The customer stated she was otherwise satisfied with the services.

Resolution: Ms. Allison Anderson thanked the customer for her comment and stated someone would investigate what occurred. An investigation was performed based on the customer's allegations; though there were a number of stops while the customer was on board the vehicle, the customer's trip lasted 121 minutes and fell within the permissible on board time fixed route equivalent. The routing was also progressive. There were no service failures identified in the investigation. Ms. Jennifer Weber spoke with the customer about the investigation findings and permissible OBT standards on May 21, 2015.

Customer #7

Comment/Complaint: The non-customer stated his comment pertained to the Long-Term Sustainability Report scheduled presentation to the Board in June 2015; the non-customer stated it was suggested that further discussion of the report occur only if the Board requested this. The non-customer stated he thought members of the AAC should be able to see the report.

Resolution: AAC member Dr. Phil Posner stated he had already seen a preview of the report, and he would see it before it was presented. Dr. Posner stated AAC was involved in this process. Mr. Christian Kent stated the report would be a public document, and it would make recommendations on how to leverage bus and rail in the future along with suggestions for how Metro and MetroAccess could allow customers to keep riding for the next ten years. Mr. Kent stated the Board would likely not be ready to discuss the report right away, and the presentation was more for review to be followed by a later discussion.

AAC Member #1

Comment/Complaint: The AAC member stated she was still having major issues with operators attempting to place seatbelts on her. The AAC member stated the operators indicated they were unaware of her waiver and the white card that served as a code “cheat sheet.” The AAC member stated the operators indicated they had not been quizzed on the codes. The AAC member stated she took it upon herself to show the operators her waiver, and she would ask them to call Dispatch for clarification. The AAC member stated the operators did not want to call Dispatch, and this happened consistently for the past couple weeks but did not happen on the date of the meeting (May 18, 2015).

Resolution: Mr. Christian Kent stated the waiver appeared on the vehicle’s Ranger, and the operators should consequently be aware by the time they arrived to the AAC member’s location. Mr. Kent stated all operators were trained on these processes upon initial hire, but aspects of training, such as securement, were repeatedly tested. Mr. Omar Browne stated the white card served as a cheat sheet for the codes used by operators and dispatchers. Mr. Browne stated operators were trained to adhere to the waiver at all times. Mr. Browne thanked the customer for the details. Mr. Browne stated the customer’s trip history would be reviewed, and this issue would be addressed with the operators. Ms. Allison Anderson stated the operators were quizzed on codes during the vehicle pull outs to ensure their training was refreshed and on point.

AAC Member #2

Comment/Complaint: The AAC member stated she asked for an application for re-certification from Mr. Frank Roth, WMATA Director of Eligibility, Certification and Outreach, but she had not yet received one. The AAC member stated many customers were riding too long on the vehicles, and trip insertions caused a lot of the problem. The AAC member stated a customer could be picked up at 6:00 AM with a 9:00 AM appointment time, but they may not arrive until 9:05 AM. The AAC member stated she was picked up on Connecticut Avenue NW in DC and was taken through Virginia on the way to Suitland, Maryland. The AAC member stated this did not make sense.

Resolution: Mr. Christian Kent stated he would be certain that the AAC member received her application for re-certification. Mr. Kent stated routing was one of the most common complaints from customers. Mr. Kent stated customers' on board time (OBT) was subject to reporting and compared to Bus and Rail, and MetroAccess' compliance was favorable. Mr. Kent stated the FTA said paratransit OBT should be the equivalent of fixed route. Mr. Kent stated this included the combination of the fixed route time plus additional time needed for transfer. Mr. Kent stated FTA helped clarify the laws to ensure this was calculated as accurately as possible. Mr. Kent stated they would look into presenting this more thoroughly at a future AAC meeting. Mr. Kent stated it helped when specific trips were presented for investigation.

AAC Member #3

Comment/Complaint: The AAC member stated she thought it was a good idea to present the On Board Time (OBT) calculations because this was an issue that had come up in AAC public comments, and it needed to be addressed.

Resolution: Mr. Christian Kent responded to another AAC member in stating WMATA would look into presenting this information at a future meeting. The AAC Member was thanked for her comment.